

March 8, 2001

HOUSING BONDS AND CREDITS

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, Representative AMO HOUGHTON and I are today introducing legislation to make three important changes to two of the most popular and efficient housing programs before Congress, the single family Mortgage Revenue Bond (MRB) program and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

First, this bill repeals the ten-year rule, a provision added to the MRB program in 1988 that prevents the states from fully using mortgage bonds by limiting the extent to which new mortgages can be made on outstanding bonds on which prepayments have been made by the original beneficiaries. States estimate that, between 1998 and 2002, the ten-year rule means the loss of over \$8.5 billion in mortgage authority, denying over 100,000 qualified lower and moderate income home buyers affordable MRB mortgages.

Second, the bill replaces the present limit on the price of homes these mortgages can finance with one that works better given the fact that there is no reliable comprehensive data that exists to determine average area home prices. The current price limits were issued in 1994 based on 1993 data. They are, obviously, obsolete and well below current home price levels in most parts of the country. We propose a simpler formula limiting the purchase price to three and a half times the qualifying income under the program. This will work to preserve the goals of current law while providing a realistic limit on the program for almost all areas of the nation.

Finally, the bill makes housing credit apartment production more viable in rural areas by allowing statewide medium incomes as the basis for the income limits in that program. While this provision may need some technical adjustment, it is clear that the current rules do not provide sufficient incentives to build apartments in very low income rural areas.

Mr. HOUGHTON and I believe these changes, when combined with the increase in the caps on these programs enacted last year, will ensure a strong, effective housing program that will meet the needs of our constituents now, and well into the future. We hope these changes will be adopted in the near future.

CONGRATULATING THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHING WINNER, JOLYNN MELLIS FROM COLLEGE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN LADSON, SC

**HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today Mrs. JoLynn Mellis, a teacher from College Park Elementary School in Ladson,

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

South Carolina, was awarded the 2000 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Award by the National Science Foundation. I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Mellis on this prestigious award. This award, the nation's highest commendation for K-12 math and science teachers, recognizes sustained and exemplary work, both inside the classroom and out. These outstanding teachers serve as role models for their colleagues.

Mrs. Mellis exemplifies what is great about America's public schools. Mrs. Mellis recognizes that our children are our future; she has taken on the crucial responsibility to ensure her students master the math and science skills they require to make that future a bright one for South Carolina and for the United States of America. She has fulfilled this responsibility in outstanding fashion. I commend Mrs. Mellis for her hard work and dedication. Thank you, Mrs. Mellis.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill that will create incentives to reduce the price of prescription drugs for American consumers.

As I travel around the Second Congressional District of Tennessee, I speak with many people. One concern I hear over and over again is the high cost of medications. Many seniors, in particular, often face a choice between things like medicine, food and heat.

However, this problem is not isolated only to the elderly. All Americans face these steep prices. For example, single mothers and poor working families also have to buy medications. As a father, I cannot imagine anything worse than not being able to afford medicine for a sick child.

As has been discussed many times, there are a lot of complex reasons that prices are so high, and it goes far beyond greedy manufacturers as some have suggested. I believe the primary culprit is a bloated federal bureaucracy that adds years and literally tens of millions of dollars to the development cost of new drugs.

Some new drugs can cost more than a billion dollars to bring to market. In exchange, these drugs have a profound impact on the health of Americans and hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Fundamentally, we need to find ways to reduce these development costs.

The second great inequity is that many countries have draconian cost controls. While these formularies may be sufficient to pay the price to physically produce a pill or medicine, they rarely take into account the phenomenal expenses that went into the development of the drug. These development costs are then shifted to a much smaller consumer base of consumers who end up paying outrageously high prices. If manufacturers and researchers were ever completely stripped of the ability to recover these costs, the flow of new drugs would slow dramatically, if not end completely.

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Nevertheless, it is wrong that Americans are so often asked to pay the price for drugs that benefit all mankind. It is particularly frustrating to consumers when they see our neighbors to the North and South paying much lower prices for exactly the same drug.

I believe that this situation needs to be examined and addressed. In the meantime, my proposal would extend a new tax incentive to domestic manufacturers who could demonstrate that they are offering drugs to American consumers at the same average price the drugs are offered to citizens in Canada and Mexico. Hopefully this tax provision will strongly encourage drug makers to reduce their prices for average American consumers.

American ingenuity is fueling the greatest health revolution in the history of mankind. We need to do everything possible to fulfill the promise of this research and alleviate suffering for everyone. However, American consumers deserve fair access to the products of our Nation's research engine, and I hope my legislation will encourage manufacturers to find innovative ways to reduce domestic prices or more equitably spread development costs among a larger base of consumers abroad.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and improve healthcare for all American consumers.

INTRODUCTION OF VETERANS AMERICAN DREAM HOMEOWNER-SHIP ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2001

**HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, thousands of former servicemen and servicewomen in five states are currently prohibited from receiving state-financed home mortgages. That is why Congressman HERGER and I, along with seven of our colleagues, are introducing the Veterans American Dream Homeownership Assistance Act. This legislation is similar to bills we introduced in the 104th, 105th, and 106th Congresses.

In order to help veterans own a home, Congress created a program where states could issue tax-exempt bonds in order to raise funds to finance mortgages for owner-occupied residences. Five states—Wisconsin, Alaska, Oregon, California, and Texas—implemented such a program for their veterans. Under a little-known provision in the 1984 tax bill, Congress limited the veterans eligible for this program to those who began military service before 1977.

As a result of the 1984 tax bill, veterans who entered military service after January 1, 1977 are prohibited from receiving a state-financed veterans mortgage. This means veterans who served honorably in Panama, Grenada, or the Gulf War cannot get veterans home mortgages from their state government. Are those who began serving our country after January 1, 1977 any less deserving than those who served before?

This arbitrary cutoff was created to raise additional revenue in the 1984 tax bill by limiting the issuance of tax-exempt bonds. When this

provision was enacted, post-1976 veterans were a small percentage of all veterans, without much voice to protest this discriminatory change. But, nineteen years later, there are thousands of veterans who have served our nation honorably.

Mr. Speaker, as time goes by, this legislation takes on increasing importance. The State of Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has informed me that if the cap on veterans bonds is not lifted this year, the State will be forced to disband the program because too few veterans are eligible for the program.

This legislation would simply eliminate the cutoff that exists under current law. Under our proposal, former servicemen and service-women in the five states who served our country beginning before or after January 1, 1977 will be eligible to qualify for a state-financed home mortgage. This legislation does not increase federal discretionary spending by 1 cent. It simply allows the five states that have a mortgage finance program for their veterans to provide mortgages to all veterans regardless of when they served in the military.

There is no justification to allow some veterans to qualify for a home mortgage while others cannot. Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to help those veterans who have served after January 1, 1977 to own a home and pass this important legislation into law.

#### CELEBRATING THE CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY CENTENNIAL

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 8, 2001*

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize an educational institution that deserves praise for a century of distinguished teaching, research, and public service to the state of California and the nation. On March 8, 2001, California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo will begin an 18-month celebration of its centennial.

Indeed, Cal Poly, as the university is often called, has a great deal to celebrate. In the 1890's, Myron angel, a San Luis Obispo County chronicler, was dismayed by the practical ineptness he experienced in spite of his college education. He campaigned for a local facility that would "teach the hand as well as the head, so that no young man or young woman would be sent off in the world to earn their living poorly equipped for any task." Angel's prominence reinforced an earlier proposition of the district state senator, Sylvester C. Smith, to build a polytechnic institute in San Luis Obispo. Southern Pacific Railroad had just completed the last link in its coastal route and subsequently backed the proposal as an effort to increase business for the new line. On March 8 in the first year of the 20th century, legislation founding the California Polytechnic School was signed into law after six years of debate.

The law included the practical mandate of its founders, "To furnish the young of both sexes mental and manual training in the arts

and sciences, including agriculture, mechanics, engineering, business methods, domestic economics, and others such branches as will fit the students for non-professional walks of life." A great deal changed in the ensuing decades—including the definition of a professional—California Polytechnic School, a vocational high school, grew into California Polytechnic State University, a premier undergraduate institution. The essence of the original charge is still part of the state law, and has remained constant in the university's present philosophy.

A tour of the modern Cal Poly campus traces the progression of ten decades, and confirms the strength of the original "learn by doing" philosophy. Among the facilities spread across the university's 5,051 acres are fourteen research centers and institutes. The founders would be pleased to observe the activity, for example, in the Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute, where students apply their knowledge and research to assist the community's landowners and public agencies in improved urban forest management. They would also marvel at the Dairy Products Technology Center, where hands-on student research provides new and improved safety methods and technologies for the dairy products used by all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of relevant facts about Cal Poly that warrant recognition. Its first enrollment of 20 students has grown to 17,000, and the institution has bestowed more than 107,000 bachelor's and master's degrees since 1942. And during World War II, 4,700 cadets were trained at the Navy's pre-flight programs located at Cal Poly. Remarkably, 97 percent of Cal Poly graduates are successfully employed or admitted to graduate school within a year of graduation.

Cal Poly nears the end of its first century still focused on its founding purpose, which is an achievement that has not gone unnoticed. Last year, US News and World Report named California Polytechnic State University the Top Regional Public University in the Western United States for the eighth consecutive year. Cal Poly also received the 2001 designation for Best Undergraduate Computer Engineering Department without a Ph.D. Program awarded by the same publication. The National Science Foundation has recognized Cal Poly's science program as among the most innovative in the nation. And the University Center for Teach Education is the only program in the state selected to join the prestigious National Network for Education renewal.

As California Polytechnic State University rises among the ranks of major American universities, time continues to test and prove the worth of a Cal Poly education. The centennial slogan, "A Century of Achievement, A Tradition for the Future" clearly expresses the school's pride as an evolving institution, while remaining true to the school's original vision. Cal Poly graduates possess the knowledge and skills to step right into professional careers of planning, designing, building, operating and improving whole structures as well as entire communities, of managing farms and businesses, of developing minds and expanding knowledge. In short, Cal Poly and its graduates are making a profound contribution to the quality of life in California, the nation, and the world.

Mr. Speaker I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating California Polytechnic State University on a century of remarkable achievements.

#### NATIONAL SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AWARENESS WEEK

**HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 8, 2001*

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to establish the last week in April as National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

This cause was presented to me by one of my constituents, Joyce Edson. Joyce's son, James, was shaken by his licensed child care provider between March and April of 1998. As a result, James was sent to the emergency room with a skull fracture, subdural hematoma, bilateral retinal hemorrhages and a broken right femur. He was only five months old.

While James survived this tragic period, he unfortunately still experiences periodic seizures, and is under the continual care of a pediatric neurologist and ophthalmologist.

Mr. Speaker, many other children are not so lucky. Each day, more than three children in the United States die from abuse and neglect. Furthermore, over 3,000 babies under the age of one are diagnosed with Shaken Baby Syndrome annually, while thousands more are misdiagnosed or go completely undetected.

Mr. Speaker, it saddens me that this situation even exists. However, I am hopeful with the designation of National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week, Congress can increase the knowledge of and ultimately prevent this dreadful occurrence.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE THOMAS P. EICHLER, FORMER SECRETARY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 8, 2001*

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today as Delaware's lone Member of Congress to honor and pay tribute to a leader in the Delaware community, Thomas P. Eichler. Tom Eichler is a dedicated, caring, compassionate, and effective individual who led two state agencies in Delaware during my tenure as Governor and after my departure. I felt fortunate to have him serve with me and I am proud to call him my friend.

As Secretary of Health and Social Services for Delaware, Tom Eichler instituted Welfare Reform before it became popular. Under Tom Eichler's leadership, Delaware's First Step Program was initiated to assist welfare recipients transition from welfare to work. Many of the individuals who participated in this program are now working and providing a brighter